

## PROJECT METHOD OF LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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The project method is related to experiential learning. Experiential learning refers to the organization of the learning process on the basis of the pedagogical principle of learning by doing, which means that learners acquire knowledge after having experienced or done something new. Experiential learning is defined as the exploitation and processing of experience, aiming not only at acquiring knowledge, but also at transforming the way of thinking and changing attitudes. In experiential learning learners participate in concrete activities that enable them to experience what they are learning about and the opportunity to reflect on those activities, since learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

The project method is a natural extension of what is already taking place in a class, an open learning process, the limits and processes of which are not strictly defined, which progresses in relation to the specific teaching context and learners' needs and interests. The project method originates from pragmatism, the philosophical movement which appeared in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and promotes action and practical application of knowledge in everyday life.

The project method supposes active creative activity and collaboration of students. It gives a chance to involve students in real communication in a foreign language. In addition, a free, developed, and well-educated person who can live and create under conditions of constantly changing world is recognized today as the greatest value. The aims concerning the creation of conditions for intellectual and spiritually-moral development of students, education requirements in self-education and self-development in each student are set before modern educational establishments. This is the project method that assumes personality-oriented teaching and educating [1, P. 156].

We may distinguish the following main types of projects [2, P. 203]:

*Research projects.* The projects of such kind demand a well-planned structure, clear aims, substantiated actuality of the research subject, precise list of the sources of information, considered methods and results. They are very close to a real research and have the similar structure.

*Creative projects.* Such projects imply the appropriate design of the results. As a rule, the structure of the collective activity of the students, elaborating the project, is not worked through in detail. It's just planned and developed according to the logic of the process, accepted by the participants. In this case the expected results and their design should be fixed beforehand.

*Role play projects.* In the projects of such kind the structure is also only planned and stays open up to the end of the project. The participants take certain roles (chosen according to the content and character of the project, to the peculiarity of the problem), which can be literary characters or fictional roles, imitating social or business relations. The participants may also invent some situations to make the role play more complicated.

*Informative projects.* The aim of such projects is to collect information about some object or phenomenon, to introduce it to the participants of the project, to analyse it, to generalize the facts, to sum up. As well as the research projects, they demand a well-planned structure and it's necessary to have a possibility to make some corrections during the work on the project.

*Practice-oriented projects.* Such a project demands a considered structure, there should be a script of activity for all the participants with definite functions of everyone, with precise results of their activity and everyone's participation. Coordination is very important at the stages of discussion, correction, presentation of the project, putting it into practice and outer evaluation.

Due to the character of contacts, projects can be: *internal*, which are organized inside a student group, at the lessons on one subject; *inter-subject* – between student group; *international* projects, in which participants are the representatives of different countries.

Due to the amount of the participants, the projects are distinguished as *personal*, *pair*, *group* projects.

Due to the length of projects realization, they can be *short-term*, *medium term* (1-2 months), *long-term* (1 year).

The following general stages can be used for successful project implementation [3, C. 91]:

*Stage 1: Speculation.* This stage includes the choice of the project topic, aiming at interest and developing a climate conducive to speculation and investigation that will lead to the research process. The Topic is chosen after a dialogue between all members of the group, and the teacher.

*Stage 2: Designing the project activities.* This stage includes formation of groups and assigning of roles, decisions concerning methodology, sources of information, activities that will take place, and places outside the classroom that students will visit. The better organized and more analytical the structuring of the activities, the easier and faster the research will be conducted.

*Stage 3: Conducting the project activities.* At this stage the groups implement the activities designed in the previous stage. Students gather information, process and categorize it. If deemed necessary, there may be intervals of information and feedback, in which students discuss issues related with cooperation among group members, problems of personal relations, and possible changes in group composition.

The next phase is synthesis and processing of information gathered. The final products are displayed in the community and become a stimulus for thought and action for other students, teachers and local community.

*Stage 4: Evaluation.* Evaluation refers to the assessment of the activities from participants and discussion about whether the initial aims and goals have been achieved, implementation of the process, and final products. Evaluation also includes assessment of the experience at individual and group level, identification of mistakes and problems. Evaluation includes peer evaluation, as well as self-evaluation.

The method of projects can be used when teaching foreign languages at any lesson, devoted to any topic. The project method gives an opportunity for students to connect learning of foreign languages with the development of their professional skills.

The most attractive point is the influence of the method on the students' motivation, since the method of projects has let the teacher turn the foreign language lessons into a creative research laboratory, where every pupil is involved into an active creative cognitive process. The students master their speaking and writing skills, widen their outlook, develop their communicative abilities, ability to discuss in a foreign language.

## REFERENCES

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